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Boudreau, Paul E

To: Burger, David
Subject: RE: Dept Daily Press Briefing (excerpt) 12/15/05

RELEASED IN FULL

From: Orlansky, Michael D
Sent: Friday, December 16, 2005 8:44 AM
To: Milovanovic, Gillian A; Wohlers, Paul; Hubler, Stephen A
Cc: Oakley, Carol V
Subject: Dept Daily Press Briefing (excerpt) 12/15/05

FYI from yesterday's briefing at the Department.

QUESTION: Linked to that topic. In Germany, apparently there are reports that a Al-Masri was paid off by the U.S. Government to keep quiet about his case for quite a while. I just wondered whether you had any comment on that.

MR. MCCORMACK: Well, the Secretary --

QUESTION: (Inaudible) the U.S. Ambassador paid him off?

MR. MCCORMACK: I saw those news reports. The Secretary addressed this topic when she was in Germany and on her trip to Europe. I don't have anything to add to what she said. There's currently pending litigation, not only in the United States but in Germany as well, concerning this topic. So there's little that I can add to what the Secretary said.

QUESTION: But would paying off a suspect -- someone like this be something that you would approve of? Disapprove of? Doesn't seem terribly legal.

MR. MCCORMACK: Again, it's a -- this is a matter of pending litigation and as such I don't have anything further to add to what the Secretary has previously stated on this issue.

QUESTION: Sean, is that really -- I mean, if it's already done, would that be something that's included in the lawsuit, if a payment had already been made?

MR. MCCORMACK: Well, questions surrounding this entire -- questions surrounding these allegations made by Mr. Al-Masri are all part of the pending litigation in the United States as well as in Germany. So as is the case when you have a case that is before the court, there are certain constraints on making any comment in public concerning the case.

Yes.

QUESTION: Sean, can you confirm that the German Foreign Minister is coming back next week to have a meeting with the Secretary here?

MR. MCCORMACK: I'll check the schedule. I didn't -- I haven't looked that far ahead on her schedule but I'll check and if in fact he is, we'll let you know.

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